

*A US flagged merchant ship is heading for Kenya under an American naval escort after a failed effort by Somali pirates to hijack the ship. The incident follows recent rescue attempts by both the French and the Americans against Somali pirates. Rob Watson reports:*

The piracy problem looks like it's **here to stay** despite the recent **muscular interventions** by the French and American navies. Whether this latest **attempted hijacking** was the promised revenge for the killing of three Somali pirates by the US navy isn't clear. But it does suggest at the very least that the pirates **haven't been deterred**.

So why does the problem **persist**? Put simply **maritime security analysts** say piracy will continue as long as the financial rewards for a successful hijacking remain so great and Somalia remains so lawless. Certainly the international effort **to thwart** the problem is relatively limited. At any one time there are only fifteen to eighteen international warships in the area **to police an expanse of sea** covering more than a million square kilometres. Although it has been suggested that raids could **be mounted** on the pirates' home towns, it seems unlikely there'll be any major increase in the military effort unless there's a spectacular hijacking attack involving the deaths of many crew members.

The reluctance to mount **a major international naval operation** in the area may also be down to the relatively small scale of the problem. Last year, according to figures from the International Maritime Bureau, nearly twenty three thousand ships passed through the Gulf of Aden. Only ninety two were hijacked.

Rob Watson, BBC News

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>here to stay</b>	when something is not unusual any longer/is generally becoming accepted (although not because it is a necessarily good thing)
<b>muscular interventions</b>	forceful and intentional involvement in a difficult situation
<b>attempted hijacking</b>	when someone tries (and fails) to use force to take control of a ship or airplane
<b>haven't been deterred</b>	have not been discouraged from doing something
<b>persist</b>	continue to exist
<b>maritime security analysts</b>	people whose job it is to study how to make the sea a safe place to travel
<b>to thwart</b>	to stop something from happening
<b>to police an expanse of sea</b>	to guard and control a potentially dangerous large area of ocean
<b>be mounted</b>	be organised or arranged
<b>a major international naval operation</b>	a large scale planned activity involving the navy (here, aimed at making the seas safer)

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